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POLITICS

Some federal web pages still down as agencies implement order 'defending women'

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President Trump signs executive orders in the Oval Office at the White House, Jan. 30.

Evan Vucci/AP

This week, the Trump administration instructed all federal agencies to remove information from their websites pertaining to "gender ideology." On Friday, a flurry of reports indicated that exact thing was happening.

In a Wednesday memo, Office of Personnel Management Acting Director Charles Ezell instructed agencies to comply by Friday at 5 p.m. ET with an executive order that says its aim is "defending women from gender ideology extremism."

That memo laid out "steps to end federal funding of gender ideology." Among those was the instruction to "Take down all outward facing media (websites, social media accounts, etc.) that inculcate or promote gender ideology."

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While "gender ideology" is not sharply defined, Trump and other transgender rights opponents have used the phrase to argue against the idea that people can identify with a gender that does not match the sex they were assigned at birth.

Indeed, the executive order calls it a "false claim that males can identify as and thus become women and vice versa."



SHOTS - HEALTH NEWS

Trump administration purges websites across federal health agencies

For a time on Friday evening, the entire Census.gov website returned an error message. Attempting to reach the Census Bureau's 2020 Results page showed part of the site was down for maintenance. Its page on sexual orientation and gender identity was still down early Saturday afternoon.

The examples proliferated on social media, with academics, journalists and activists noting that basic information had disappeared from government websites. The CDC's HIV surveillance data disappeared, as noted by Aaron Richterman, a scientist at the University of Pennsylvania. Similarly, the CDC's Youth Risk Survey data is no longer accessible, which KFF's Cynthia Cox pointed out.

"OPM sent guidance to agencies to remove gender ideology-related content from their websites by 5 pm today as part of the efforts to defend women and uphold the truth of biological sex against the radical claims of gender activists," OPM communications director McLaurine Pinover said in a statement Friday evening. "This may have been misinterpreted to mean we would shut down government websites who weren't able to comply but that is not the plan for continuing to implement this important effort."



POLITICS

Trump signs executive order taking aim at DEI programs in the military

Many who support transgender rights oppose using the phrase "gender ideology," as it implies that being transgender is a belief system, as opposed to an identity. Nearly 2 million Americans identify as trans or transgender, according to 2023 polling from KFF and Washington Post.

This week's "gender ideology" memo wasn't the only order from the Trump administration to remove information from websites. In another memo implementing an executive order aimed at "ending radical and wasteful government DEI programs," Ezell instructed agencies to "Take down all outward facing media (websites, social media accounts, etc.) of DEIA offices." DEIA stands for "diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility" in this order.



NATIONAL

Trump wants to cut the federal workforce. Who they are and what that means

When asked Friday about the removal of "DEI" information from websites, Trump said, "It doesn't sound like a bad idea to me. DEI would have ruined our country, and now it's dead."

The "Defending Women" executive order, and Ezell's resulting memo, go well beyond policing information on government websites. Ezell also instructed agencies to "review all agency programs, contracts, and grants, and terminate any that promote or inculcate gender ideology," and also to make sure that forms ask for respondents' "sex" and not their "gender."

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The memo additionally calls on agencies to make sure that "intimate spaces" are "designated by biological sex and not gender identity," which could mean transgender and nonbinary employees will be restricted in which bathrooms they use. NPR reached out for clarity on which spaces would be considered "intimate spaces" and did not receive a response.

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